



Fireworks

Publication #12

The American traditions of parades, cookouts, and fireworks help us celebrate the summer season, especially our nation's birthday on the Fourth of July. However, fireworks can turn a joyful celebration into a painful memory when children and adults are injured while using fireworks. Although legal consumer fireworks that comply with the CPSC regulations can be relatively safe, all fireworks are hazardous [Note: Fireworks are classified as hazardous substances under the FHSA] and can cause injury. Some fireworks such as illegal firecracker type devices (M-80's, quarter sticks) and professional display fireworks should never be used or handled by consumers or children due to serious injuries and death that can and do occur from such use or handling.

The following are examples of injuries from legal and illegal fireworks:

An 10-year-old boy picked up a firecracker that he had lit and dropped. It exploded before he could throw it. The boy lost his left index finger and part of the middle finger and thumb.

A 37-year-old man bent down to light what he thought was a "ground spinner." The firework flashed back at him burning his face and hand. He was diagnosed with second degree burns.

A 2-year-old boy was strapped in his stroller watching fireworks with his mother and father. Someone lit a firework that struck the child in the chest. The child sustained second degree burns on his chest and right thigh. He was in the hospital for 10 days for a skin graft operation.

To help prevent incidents like these, the federal government, under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, prohibits the sale of the most dangerous types of fireworks to consumers. These banned

fireworks include large reloadable mortar shells, cherry bombs, aerial bombs, M-80 salutes and larger firecrackers. Also banned are mail-order kits designed to build these fireworks.

In a regulation that went into effect December 6, 1976, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission lowered the permissible charge in firecrackers to no more than 50 milligrams of powder. In addition, these amended regulations provide performance specifications for fireworks other than firecrackers intended for consumers use, including a requirement that fuses burn at least 3 seconds, but no longer than 9 seconds. All fireworks must carry a warning label describing necessary safety precautions and instructions for safe use.

The Commission has issued a performance requirement to reduce the risk of potentially dangerous tip-over of large multiple tube mine and shell devices. Tip-over of these devices has resulted in two fatalities. The new requirement went into effect on March 26, 1997.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in 2001 about 9,500 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with fireworks. Over half the injuries were burns and most of the injuries involved the hands, eyes and head. About half of the victims were under 15 years of age.

Fireworks should be used only with extreme caution. Older children should be closely supervised, and younger children should not be allowed to play with fireworks.

Before using fireworks, make sure they are permitted in your state or local area. Many states and local governments prohibit or limit consumer fireworks, formerly known as class C fireworks, which are common fireworks and firecrackers sold

for consumer use. Consumer fireworks include shells and mortars, multiple tube devices, Roman Candles, rockets, sparklers, firecrackers with no more than 50 milligrams of powder and novelty items such as snakes and airplanes.

The following is a summary of state regulations as of May 1, 2000.

I. STATES THAT ALLOW SOME OR ALL TYPES OF CONSUMER FIREWORKS (formerly known as class C fireworks), **APPROVED BY ENFORCING AUTHORITY, OR AS SPECIFIED IN LAW** (36 states including the District of Columbia):

Alabama	Nebraska
Alaska	New Hampshire
Arkansas	New Mexico
California	North Carolina
Colorado	North Dakota
District of Columbia	Oklahoma
Florida	Oregon
Hawaii	South Carolina
Idaho	South Dakota
Indiana	Tennessee
Kansas	Texas
Kentucky	Utah
Louisiana	Virginia
Maryland	Washington
Michigan	West Virginia
Minnesota	Wisconsin
Mississippi	Wyoming
Missouri	
Montana	

(The above states enforce the federal regulations and applicable state restrictions).

II. STATE HAVING NO FIREWORKS LAWS EXCEPT AT COUNTY LEVEL:

Nevada

(CPSC regulations are still applicable for this state)

III. STATES THAT ALLOW ONLY SPARKLERS AND/OR OTHER NOVELTIES (total of 6 states):

Connecticut	Maine
Illinois	Ohio
Iowa	Pennsylvania

IV. STATES THAT BAN ALL CONSUMER FIREWORKS (including those which are allowed by CPSC regulations) - (total of 8 states):

Arizona	New Jersey
Delaware	New York
Georgia	Rhode Island
Massachusetts	Vermont

To help consumers use fireworks more safely, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers these recommendations:

-- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks under any circumstances. Sparklers, considered by many the ideal "safe" firework for the young, burn at very high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing. Children cannot understand the danger involved and cannot act appropriately in case of emergency.

-- Older children should only be permitted to use fireworks under close adult supervision. Do not allow any running or horseplay.

-- Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass and flammable materials.

-- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that don't go off.

-- Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Douse and soak them with water and throw them away.

-- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.

- Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.
- Store fireworks in a dry, cool place. Check instructions for special storage directions.

**PARENTS SHOULD SUPERVISE THE
ORDERING AND USE OF MAIL-
ORDER "MAKE YOUR OWN" FIREWORK
KITS.**

To report a dangerous product or a product related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270. Consumers can obtain releases and recall information at CPSC's web site at www.cpsc.gov. Consumers can report product hazards to info@cpsc.gov.

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